

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Terry Pressley,)	C/A No. 6:06-2820-GRA-WMC
)	
)	
vs.)	
)	
Al Cannon;)	Report and Recommendation
Mitch Lucas;)	(Partial Summary Dismissal)
Officer NFN Wright;)	
Officer NFN Williams;)	
Charleston County Detention Center; and)	
Corporal NFN Goodyear,)	
)	
Defendants.)	
)	

This is a civil rights action filed *pro se* by a local detention center detainee.¹ Plaintiff is currently incarcerated at the Charleston County Detention Center. In the Amended Complaint filed in this case (Entry 6, as supplemented by Entry 8), Plaintiff alleges that he has suffered pain in his shoulder, a rash, and a persistent dry cough as a result of the allegedly overcrowded and unsanitary conditions of confinement at the detention center. He claims that all Defendants are aware of the problems, but fail to do anything to correct them. He seeks compensatory and injunctive relief.

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of Plaintiff's *pro se* Amended Complaint filed in this case. This review has been conducted pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915, 1915A, and the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1996, and in light of the following precedents: Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S.

¹ Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §636(b)(1), and Local Rule 73.02(B)(2)(e), D.S.C., this magistrate judge is authorized to review all pretrial matters in such *pro se* cases and to submit findings and recommendations to the District Court. See also 28 U.S.C. § § 1915(e); 1915A (as soon as possible after docketing, district courts should review prisoner cases to determine whether they are subject to summary dismissal).

25 (1992); Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 324-25 (1989); Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Correction, 64 F.3d 951 (4th Cir. 1995)(*en banc*); Todd v. Baskerville, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983); Boyce v. Alizaduh, 595 F.2d 948 (4th Cir. 1979).

Pro se complaints are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys, Gordon v. Leeke, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir. 1978), and a federal district court is charged with liberally construing a complaint filed by a *pro se* litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. Hughes v. Rowe, 449 U.S. 5, 9-10 & n.7 (1980); Cruz v. Beto, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* complaint, the plaintiff's allegations are assumed to be true. Fine v. City of New York, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2d Cir. 1975). Nevertheless, the requirement of liberal construction does not mean that this Court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. Weller v. Department of Social Servs., 901 F.2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990). Even under this less stringent standard, however, the Amended Complaint filed in this case is subject to partial summary dismissal as to one Defendant under the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

The Amended Complaint should be partially summarily dismissed as to Defendant Charleston County Detention Center since it is not a "person" subject to liability pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.² In order to state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, an aggrieved party must sufficiently allege that he or she was injured by "the deprivation of any [of his or her] rights,

²Section 1983 is the procedural mechanism through which Congress provided a private civil cause of action based on allegations of federal constitutional violations by persons acting under color of state law. See Jennings v. Davis, 476 F.2d 1271 (8th Cir. 1973). The purpose of section 1983 is to deter state actors from using badge of their authority to deprive individuals of their *federally guaranteed* rights and to provide relief to victims if such deterrence fails. See McKnight v. Rees, 88 F.3d 417 (6th Cir. 1996)(emphasis added).

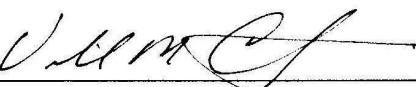
privileges, or immunities secured by the [United States] Constitution and laws" by a "person" acting "under color of state law." See 42 U.S.C. § 1983; Monroe v. Page, 365 U.S. 167 (1961); see generally 5 Charles Alan Wright & Arthur R. Miller, Federal Practice and Procedure § 1230 (2002). It is well settled that only "persons" may act under color of state law, therefore, a defendant in a section 1983 action must qualify as a "person." For example, several courts have held that inanimate objects such as buildings, facilities, and grounds do not act under color of state law. See Allison v. California Adult Auth., 419 F.2d 822, 823 (9th Cir. 1969)(California Adult Authority and San Quentin Prison not "person[s]" subject to suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983); Preval v. Reno, 57 F.Supp.2d 307, 310 (E.D. Va. 1999)("[T]he Piedmont Regional Jail is not a 'person,' and therefore not amenable to suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983."); Brooks v. Pembroke City Jail, 722 F. Supp. 1294, 1301(E.D. N.C. 1989)(“Claims under § 1983 are directed at ‘persons’ and the jail is not a person amenable to suit.”). Additionally, use of the term "staff" or the equivalent as a name for alleged defendants, without the naming of specific staff members, is not adequate to state a claim against a "person" as required in section 1983 actions. See Martin v. UConn Health Care, 2000 WL 303262, *1 (D. Conn., Feb 09, 2000); Ferguson v. Morgan, 1991 WL 115759 (S.D. N.Y. Jun 20, 1991). Since Defendant Charleston County Detention Center is a group of buildings or a building, it is an inanimate object not subject to suit under § 1983, thus the Amended Complaint should be dismissed as to this Defendant.

Recommendation

Accordingly, it is recommended that the District Court partially dismiss the Amended Complaint in this case *without prejudice* and without issuance and service of process as to

Defendant Charleston County Detention Center. See Denton v. Hernandez; Neitzke v. Williams; Haines v. Kerner; Brown v. Briscoe, 998 F.2d 201, 202-04 & n. * (4th Cir. 1993); Boyce v. Alizaduh; Todd v. Baskerville, 712 F.2d at 74; see also 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B); 28 U.S.C. § 1915A (as soon as possible after docketing, district courts should review prisoner cases to determine whether they are subject to summary dismissal). The case should be served on the remaining Defendants.

Plaintiff's attention is directed to the important notice on the next page.



WILLIAM M. CATOE
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE

December 19, 2006

Greenville, South Carolina

Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation

The parties are advised that they may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Court Judge. Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections. In the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court judge need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must "only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation." *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310 (4th Cir. 2005).

Specific written objections must be filed within ten (10) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The time calculation of this ten-day period excludes weekends and holidays and provides for an additional three (3) days for filing by mail. Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a) & (e). Filing by mail pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

Larry W. Propes, Clerk
United States District Court
P.O. Box 10768
Greenville, South Carolina 29603

Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *United States v. Schronce*, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984); *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985).